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ELECTIONS
IN A FAKE
DEMOCRACY, P.11



WORLD SOCIAL
FORUM MEETS 8

THE INDYPENDENT

THE NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

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ENGINEERING THE WORLD

U.S. AGRIBUSINESS
FORCES FRANKENFOOD
ON THE WORLD

SPECIAL REPORT
FROM BRAZIL
BY PABLO ORTELLADO
IN THE CENTERFOLD

FRANK REYNOSO

WELCOME TO AMERICA WELCOME TO THE TOMBS

FIRST PERSON
BY YONI MISHAL

It was a beautiful Friday in early January. A perfect day to sell disposable cameras to tourists in Battery Park, or so I thought. Everything was going fine until the afternoon when a man approached me as if to purchase a camera. I quoted him the prices. Grimacing, he said, "Police... do you have a license?"

I showed him my tax identification form, but that didn't satisfy him. Another undercover cop appeared behind me. This one was smiling and told me, "Well, you'll have to come with us."

I was stunned and started to panic. "This can't be happening." I tried to talk my way out of it, but they just handcuffed me and threw me in a van.

It was their first catch of the day. The cops told me that they had never arrested a white man before.

We drove around for three hours, picking up more street vendors until the van was jam-packed with 13 of us.

Almost everyone was either Chinese or African. At one stop, while arresting an African vendor and shoving him in the van, one cop said with a laugh, "Aren't you already in the car? You guys all look alike!" referring to the other Africans.

"That's not funny," responded one of the Africans already in the van. This was a mistake. He later asked the cop to loosen his handcuffs. The cop replied, "I'll just tighten them up a little for you."

We reached the First Precinct at about 5:30 p.m.

Unloaded like cargo, we were referred to as "bodies" and "prisoners." The cops complained among themselves about all the overtime they had to put in because they were so many bodies to process.

We were searched, fingerprinted and photographed. As

we were being led off to a holding cell a cop taunted some of the men, "Ooooh! It's Chinese day I see."

We were placed in a filthy cell, with no water or toilet, and not enough seats. Forced to sit on the dirty floor, I started talking to Cody, who was from Mauritania and had been in the states for a few years.

He explained, "The city doesn't want people to sell stuff on the street, when they sell the same shit for more money inside the government-owned souvenir shops, or get rent and taxes from shops they don't own."

Cody said he gets collared every couple of months. "It's part of the job, and there's nothing to do about it." He said things were worse under Bloomberg. "Before him it was better. Now, there's no use in getting a license because the police can always charge you with selling fake products, so I don't even bother to try."

I tried to pass the time by talking to Cody while most of my cellmates fell asleep, but I was bored and uncomfortable. At one point the cops offered to get Chinese take-out - chicken wings or beef with broccoli - but we had to

pay \$7 each and the cops said we should thank them for getting anything at all.

We were cooped up for nearly 10 hours. One man kept begging for water. Eventually, a cop came. "You remember what you told me before?" the cop said. "The police are bad, very bad. Well, you're right," and left without giving him anything to drink.

Finally, at 3:30 a.m., we were transferred to the courthouse jail at 100 Centre Street. As I was being handcuffed by a cop, he said that we'd be thrown in "with real criminals."

"You can try running away this time," he told me, "and then I'll have a chance to shoot you."

"You would like that, wouldn't you?" was my reply. That made him angry and he gave me a threatening look, which made me afraid. He softened his tone a little and said it had been a "boring day."

The cops stuffed us in the van again and drove us to the "tombs" at Centre Street. We were welcomed by a picture of the Statue of Liberty holding up a sign reading: "STOP! Go back!"

After being searched again, a guard took us to the cells. The place appeared brand new and there were four empty cells, but we were placed in one that was packed with 30 people. On one side there was a toilet that stank and a small, dirty sink.

People were everywhere: sitting on the floor, standing in bunches against the bars. Sleeping men were stepped on when

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR, P.2 • THE REPUBLICANS ARE COMING!, P.10



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WHAT IS INDYMEDIA?

With autonomous chapters in more than 100 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to illuminate and analyze issues impacting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate. We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The Independent is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?

The IMC has an open door. You can write for The Independent, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

FEBRUARY



CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH!

Toni & Slade Morrison will be reading at the College of Mt. St. Vincent on Sunday, February 8, at 2pm. 718.793.3119

THE INDEPENDENT

has open meetings every Tuesday, 7 pm at 34 E. 29 St., 2nd floor.

To submit events for the calendar, call (212) 684-8112.

Every Monday

6-10pm • *Public Speakout w/No Police State*; Union Sq.

11pm • *Open DJ Sessions* BYO CDs & vinyl; 97 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn

Every Tuesday

7pm • *NYC IMC Print Meeting*; 34 East 29th St., 2nd Floor

7pm • *Garden w/More Gardens*; East 158th St., Bronx; 212-533-8019

Every Wednesday

12:30-1:30pm • *Ground Zero Witness for Peace & Justice Vigil*; Church Street btwn Fulton & Vesey streets

6-8pm • *Hats Not Bombs*; knitting circle for all skill levels. Jane Doe Books. 93 Montrose Ave., Brooklyn

Every Thursday

5:30-6:30pm • *Women in Black for Palestine*; 14th Street & Broadway

8pm-12am • *Poets Open Mic*; 48 E. 7th St.

Every Friday

10am • *Yoga for Those Who Serve Others*; 7 W. 24th St.

1pm • *Food Not Bombs* (see Sunday)

Every Saturday

Urban Outdoor Walking Tours of NYC Shores & Parks; 212-352-9330, Dave.lutz@treebranch.com

3:30-4:30pm • *Brooklyn Food Not Bombs*; NW corner of Fort Greene Park, autnomia68@riseup.net

6pm • *Art Performance & Film*; Garden, 346 E. Houston St.

Every Sunday

1pm • *Central Park Walking Tour*; Fifth Avenue & E. 72nd St. (in front of the statue of Sam Morse.) 212-310-6600

1pm • *Food Not Bombs* Cooks at ABC No Rio; serves vegetarian food in Tompkins Square Park SW at 3:30 pm

3-5pm • *Solidarity w/ Palestine Rally*; 14th St. & B'way

5pm • *RNC Bike Bloc* (2nd Sunday of every month) 49 E. Houston St.

6pm • *Books Through Bars*; ABC No Rio, 156 Rivington St., 2nd Floor

6pm • *IMC Sunday Night at the Movies*; 34 East 29th St.

Saturday, Feb. 7

11:30am-8pm • free *Argentine Political and Social Documentary Film & Video Festival*; Maison Française, Columbia University, 116th Street & Broadway, ciciodocumentales.8m.com

Sunday, Feb. 8

Lynne Stewart speaks on *defending the Bill of Rights*; Bridgewater Mall Community Center; Info: 908-526-5215

3 pm
Toni & Slade Morrison
Reading & Signing; College of Mt. St. Vincent, 6301 Riverdale Ave. (at W. 263rd St.), 718-796-3119

7pm • \$5-10 donation
Film screening fundraiser for Jeff Luers; Bluestockings Bookstore; 172 Allen St. (btwn Rivington & Stanton)

Tuesday, Feb. 10

7pm
My Bloody Valentine: Gay Love and Murder on the American Stage; CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Ave., Room 9204

Wednesday, Feb. 11

7:30pm • \$10 donation
A Left Strategy Series, Another World is Possible! w/ Bill Fletcher & Brooke Lehman; moderated by Stephen Duncombe, Brecht Forum, 122 W. 27th St.; www.brechtforum.org

9pm • free
Subterranean Salsa, Beginners Salsa class w/ Tom S.; BARBELOW, 209 Smith St., Brooklyn salsa-nyc@earthlink.net

Thursday, Feb. 12

7-9pm
RNC Clearinghouse Meeting; St. Marks Church, 131 E. 10th St.

8pm • \$5
I Love RNCnotwelcome.org; Benefit Concert, Siberia Bar, 40th St. & 9 Ave., www.rncnotwelcome.org

Friday, Feb. 13

3pm
New Scenarios for U.S.-Cuba Relations: Latin American Perspectives; CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Ave., Room 9205 212-817-2096 for res.

7:30pm • \$10 donation
Book Party - Reclaiming Zimbabwe by Horace Campbell; Brecht Forum, 122 West 27th St., www.brechtforum.org

Saturday, Feb. 14

10am-7pm
ONE DAY rare DVD/VHS sale to benefit Museum of African Cinema; 163 West 125th St., 2nd Fl., prices start at \$2.88, www.aboutharlemarts.org

2pm
PGP Encryption and PGP Encryption Training; ABC No Rio, 156 Rivington St., res. 212-254-3697, ext. 12

3pm • free
Bash the Trash - Interactive program for children K-2 exploring the science of acoustics through the use of instruments built from found objects;

Jersey City Museum, 350 Montgomery St., Jersey City, (PATH to Grove), res. 201-413-0303x141

Sunday, Feb. 15

1pm • free
Actors' Shakespeare Company performance of "All's Well That Ends Well"; Jersey City Museum, 350 Montgomery St., Jersey City (PATH to Grove)

6pm • \$5 donation
Sunday Nights at the IMC: Screening of "Dark Days"; documentary about people living in the subway tunnels under New York, 34 E. 29th St., 2nd Floor, 212-684-8112

Tuesday, Feb. 17

6pm-8pm • free
Author Keith Gilyard reads from and discusses his book Liberation Memories: The Rhetoric and Art of Oliver Killens; Medgar Evers College, Presidents Conf. Center, 1650 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, res. by Feb. 14, 718-270-6983

Thursday, Feb. 19

7pm • \$15
Looking Back, Moving Forward: The Spirit of Marcus Garvey; Nuyorican Poets Cafe, 235 East 3rd St., (btwn Aves B & C)

LETTERS

Send your letters to imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org • NYC IMC • 34 E. 29th Street, 2nd floor, NY, NY 10016

LIKE WE'RE SUPPOSED TO KNOW WHAT TO DO

I have just read my first (and last) issue of the Independent. I can't believe the sophomoric drivel it contained. Anyone can write attack articles (this is proof) but for gods' sake make sure you have a point to make! You can't just vent and bitch about everyone - Clinton, Bush, the Pentagon, the Palestinians without mention of their suicide bombers.

I'm all in favor of dissent but you can't just bitch without coming up with an idea for a solution. Come on guys... grow up!

Ben Oliver

DON'T CARE, MEDICARE (issue #42)

Your recent article on Medicare was wonderful. I was really pleased to find your site. I was a print journalist for 26 years until my transplanted kidney failed in 1995. I received a second kidney last year.

Medicare has not said exactly how they plan to pay for my anti-rejection medications. I

called and they said they could only read from a prepared statement saying that they would continue to pay for anti-rejection drugs. If they treat anti-rejection drugs the same as all other drugs under their skimpy reimbursement formula, they will price anti-rejection drugs out of reach of anyone but the wealthy.

The irony here is that my disability pension may be too high to qualify me for Medicaid. I get \$30,000 per year. But with the cost of the drugs at \$25,000, well, you see the problem. I could not even afford the additional \$8,000 or so I would have to pay if the anti-rejection drugs are treated the same as other medications.

This statement is more profound than it seems. I have never hated anyone in my life. I don't think I can hate. But if I lose my kidney because of Bush's Medicare "improvements" I will learn to.

It is possible all will be well. But I am scared as hell that I cannot get any answers on how anti-rejection medication reimbursement will be handled. Anti-rejection drugs will be

covered... somehow.

If anti-rejection medications are priced beyond the reach of the average transplant recipient, people with transplanted hearts, lungs and livers may just die.

I waited eight years for this kidney. It would be tragic to waste it. And the deaths of people with other organs would be even more tragic.

It might be a story worth looking into. As I said, Medicare may have announced a policy regarding anti-rejection drugs since I last spoke with them. But I doubt it.

Bernie Cullen

CORRECTIONS

FROM THE ARTICLE "FT. GREENE UNDER SEIGE"

Atlas Auto Service is located in Prospect Heights, not the neighboring community of Fort Greene. While Fort Greene remains important to the fight against the arena, all homes directly threatened by the proposed Rafter development are in Prospect Heights.

MONEY FARM HEALTHCARE

HOW HOSPITALS ARE GOUGING & EVEN ARRESTING THE UNINSURED

BY DEMOCRACY NOW!

What do the Emir of Kuwait and the working poor of the United States have in common? Not much, except when it comes to paying for health care in the United States. They all pay the highest price: up to 500 percent more than the hospital receives for insured patients.

That's because hospitals negotiate discounts with big institutions like insurance companies, HMOs or the government that require payment of only a fraction of the listed charges. Those institutions have substantial bargaining power and can guarantee hospitals a certain number of patients. Uninsured people, on the other hand, have no bargaining power and are left to fend for themselves once they get their bills.

Jennifer Kankiewicz was rushed to New York's Beth Israel Hospital in July 2002 for an emergency appendectomy and was hospitalized for two days. "I waited through a day's worth of not being able to get out of bed because I didn't have health insurance," recalled Kankiewicz. "The next day, a friend drove me to the hospital in an emergency and we went to the closest hospital we knew of."

"They provided great service," she said. The hospital "reassured me that I could apply for Medicaid assistance. So I thought, maybe Medicaid would help me with the \$24,000 that it cost me."

Though Kankiewicz is poor, she was not poor enough. She was denied Medicaid assistance because she makes \$19,000 a year. In order to qualify for Medicaid, Kankiewicz needed to be pregnant or disabled or earn less than \$350 a week. Though she was able to convince her surgeon to reduce the charges slightly, she still faces more than \$19,000 in hospital bills—more than her annual salary. She said she is being billed by six separate billing groups and, unlike the big insurance companies, Kankiewicz has no negotiating power with the hospital or its collection agencies.

"It's like sending a guppy out to the sharks," said Elisabeth Benjamin, the supervising attorney of the Health Law Unit at the Legal Aid Society in New York. "It's just not fair."

Several states operate a funding pool for hospitals to offset the money they spend on charity care as well as bad debt. In New York, these funds total almost \$1 billion a year.

Benjamin is the author of a new Legal Aid report called "State Secret: How Government Fails To Ensure That Uninsured And Underinsured Patients Have Access To State Charity Funds." The report alleges that none of the 22 hospitals surveyed in New York City have a process that would let poor or uninsured patients apply for the hundreds of millions of dollars in state government funds intended to help pay for hospital care for the needy, despite the fact that they are all receiving between \$4 million and \$60 million annually in charity care funds from the state. As a result, patients who are uninsured and have limited financial resources are forced to pay inflated prices for their care.

"An average consumer that might want to call a hospital and find out what the charity care policy is, forget it," Benjamin said. "What we found was at all 22 [hospitals], no one had a way to actually get the state money



Hospitals hound uninsured patients who owe them money by using a variety of methods: filing lawsuits, slapping liens on homes, seizing bank accounts and garnishing wages.

applied to your case."

According to Benjamin, Beth Israel receives \$28 million a year for charity or bad debt cases. But rather than establishing a process to inform patients like Kankiewicz about applying for this money, Beth Israel made her go through the process of applying for Medicaid.

"I could have told Jennifer in 30 seconds, she wasn't going to be eligible for Medicaid," Benjamin said. "For her to have gone to a fair hearing [on Medicaid eligibility] on her own was a waste of time."

Kankiewicz said that when she initially spoke to the collections department at Beth Israel, they asked her why she chose the most expensive hospital if she was uninsured. "Honestly, I didn't understand that I was a consumer, that I had to shop," Kankiewicz said. "I wasn't making a decision at the time. I rushed to the hospital that I knew where it was."

Like Kankiewicz, many uninsured patients end up with huge medical bills and no way of paying them. Hospitals then hound them for payment using collection agencies and lawyers, who employ such methods as filing lawsuits, slapping liens on homes, seizing bank accounts and garnishing wages to extract payments. Some hospitals now rank among America's most aggressive debt collectors.

"[Patients] don't know they have been sued because the collection attorneys and the collection agent hired by the hospitals are voracious," Benjamin said. "They claim to serve people, but in fact they have never served anybody with court papers. The next thing my clients know,

their bank accounts have been taken." But for some people, it can get worse than that.

A RETURN TO DEBTORS' PRISONS

Hospitals in several states have actually had patients arrested and jailed if they are unable to pay their debts. This legal tactic is chillingly known as "body attachment."

"Body attachment is basically a warrant for arrest," said Claudia Lennhoff, executive director of Champaign County Health Care Consumers in Illinois. She said that if patients miss court dates, which they may not even know they have, the attorneys for the hospitals or collection agencies can ask the judge to issue warrants for the patients' arrest.

"They can go out immediately and find that person or it can just kind of be out there and then if the person gets pulled over, for example, for having a taillight out or speeding or something, it pops up, and then shows a warrant for arrest and the person gets brought in, and then they get incarcerated," Lennhoff said.

Take the case of Jim Bean, a musician in Urbana, Illinois. More than a decade ago, he received treatment at the Carle Foundation Hospital, the primary teaching hospital of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, for a gunshot wound after a failed suicide attempt. He attended 13 court dates relating to his \$7,718 hospital bill. But then Bean missed a hearing, which he says he did not know was scheduled. It was jail for him.

SUNDAY NIGHTS AT THE IMC

MOVIE SCREENING SERIES EVERY SUNDAY

DOORS OPEN AT 6 P.M.

FEB 15 Dark Days

FEB 22 Brazil

FEB 29 Bread & Roses

The Next issue of **THE INDYPENDENT** will hit the streets on **FEBRUARY 17**

The deadline to submit articles for the next issue is **FEBRUARY 12**

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For Tickets: NYCGRASSROOTSMEDIA.ORG

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or go to Bluestockings: 172 Allen St.

IN BRIEF

BRONX TENANTS SUE SLUMLORD, STILL COLD

Tenants of a Bronx apartment building with 230 housing code violations took their landlord to housing court on January 15 after the death of one resident in December, which many feel was partially caused by lack of heat in the building. Residents say that the heat was on from Thanksgiving day for three weeks into December, and that many are frequently without heat or cooking gas.

Twenty-five residents of 98 W. 183rd St. in the Bronx are going to court with the support of the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. The owner claims that the suit is the result of religious bigotry and declared that "I swear by the Prophet that it's one of the best-kept buildings in the entire Bronx."

COP COMMANDO DROPS DEAD ACCOSTING VENDOR

A New York police officer in an elite counterterrorism unit collapsed and died Saturday while running to aid another officer who was arresting a sidewalk vendor. Officer Ferguson was a seventeen year veteran of the NYPD and worked in a unit designed to protect high-traffic areas of the city. He was responding to a call for help from another officer in the SoHo district who was struggling to arrest a man for violation of trademark rights.

BLACK PANTHER UP FOR PAROLE AFTER 30 YEARS

Herman Bell, one of the "New York Three" and former Black Panther, is coming up for parole in February, after his conviction for allegedly killing two police officers in Harlem in 1971. Another, Jalil Muntaqim, (formerly Anthony Bottom) was denied parole last year and will be eligible again in July. The third member, Albert "Nuh" Washington, died in prison in 2000. FBI ballistics experts have never been able to match the bullet used to kill Jones to a gun they seized from Washington and Muntaqim. The officer's families and local police have started a letter-writing campaign to keep Bell in prison, despite the fact that two children of one of the officers are publicly asking that he be released.

PORTIONS OF PATRIOT ACT RULED UNCONSTITUTIONAL

In a ruling that was made public on Monday, January 26, U.S. District Judge Audrey Collins declared that portions of the USA PATRIOT Act violate the First and Fifth Amendments. The ruling covers the part of the act dealing with giving "expert advice or assistance" to groups designated as terrorist organizations.

Locally, Greenburgh, a town in Westchester County, passed a resolution last Friday condemning the PATRIOT Act, joining 240 cities across the country as well as Alaska, Hawaii and Vermont. The New York City Council is preparing to vote on a similar resolution on Feb. 4.

U.S. BUDGET DEFICIT AT ALL-TIME HIGH

The Congressional Budget Office announced late January that the federal budget deficit will reach an all-time high of \$480 billion this year. Administration officials, however, estimate a \$521b deficit, blaming a weak economy and the costs of the War on Terror. Currently military engagements are costing the United States more than \$1 billion per week.

POLICE STATE

SCHOOLS AGAINST KIDS:

'ZERO TOLERANCE' POLICIES CRIMINALIZE STUDENTS, YOUTH OF COLOR HARDEST HIT

BY ZITA ALLEN

A 10-year-old girl arrested for throwing crayons, paper and other art supplies around an empty classroom now has a Legal Aid defense attorney in what started as a school disciplinary case but quickly found its way into the juvenile justice system. This scenario is unfolding in Palm Beach, Florida, but education and civil rights advocates say it could happen here, thanks to the zero-tolerance school disciplinary policies being implemented by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Joel Klein.

In school district after school district, an inflexible and unthinking zero-tolerance approach to an exaggerated juvenile crime problem is derailing the educational process," says Judith Browne, senior attorney for the Washington-based civil rights group the Advancement Project. "The educational system is starting to look more like the criminal justice system. Acts once handled by a principal or a parent are now being handled by prosecutors and the police."

Brown researched and authored the 2003 report "Derailed: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track" detailing the Advancement Project's findings of zero-tolerance's impact in cities like Houston, Palm Beach, Denver, and Chicago. The report was a follow-up to an earlier study in collaboration with the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University entitled "Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequence of Zero-Tolerance and School Discipline."

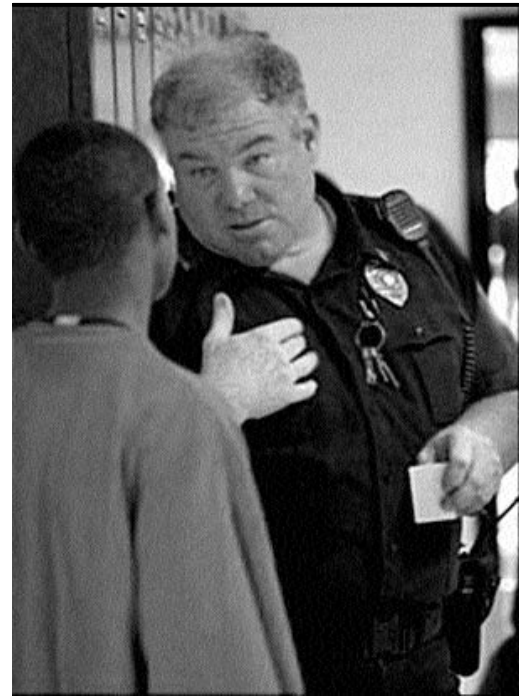
Both studies maintain that zero-tolerance policies "are derailing students from an academic track in schools to a future in the juvenile justice system" and that African-American, Latino and disabled children are often the ones who "bear the brunt of the consequences of these policies."

New York, the largest school system in the country, was not included in these studies but it was not, Brown says, for lack of interest.

"The data was not available. I'm a New Yorker and went to public school in New York, and I know that the role of police in public schools has changed over the years. In New York there is this history of excessive use of force in communities of color, and if you can't trust the police on the street and you put them in the schools there are going to be problems," Brown adds.

"The zero-tolerance approach to school discipline is the result of a mid-1980s spike in juvenile crime rates [that] gave birth to the 'superpredator' theory, which held that America was under assault by a generation of brutally amoral young people, and that only the abandonment of 'soft' educational and rehabilitative approaches in favor of strict and unrelenting discipline – a zero-tolerance approach – could end the plague," according to the Advancement Project.

The Project insists that the creation of this schoolhouse-to-jailhouse track has damaged a generation of children – particularly children of color – by criminalizing trivial offenses, pushing children out of the school system into the juvenile justice system and introducing prison-



FEAR THE FUTURE: Despite dramatic drops in youth crime, police enforcement of minor infractions has led to a jump in arrests for typical adolescent behavior.

1999 and 2001. In Houston, Baltimore and Palm Beach, there was a similar trend. Many of the arrests were for minor offenses that included talking during assembly and arguing (not fighting) with another student. Some arrests border on the absurd. For example, in New Jersey two elementary school boys were arrested and charged with terrorism for playing cops and robbers with paper guns.

Of course, Brown says, students involved in "truly criminal behavior such as murder, serious violence, or the sale or possession of illicit drugs, should be subjected to criminal charges – as they were even before zero tolerance became the watchword." But statistically, youth violence has declined and schools remain the safest places for children. Nonfatal crimes against children dropped by 44 percent, and serious violent crimes (rape, sexual assault, robbery or aggravated assault) declined 43 percent between 1999 and 2001.

In addition to railroading kids into the juvenile justice system, zero tolerance policies are also pushing them out of the school system in large numbers. A recent report by the Office of Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum and Advocates for Children (AFC), a New York nonprofit group, found that more than 160,000 high-school-age students were discharged between the 1997 and 2001. More than 55,000 were discharged in the 2000-2001 school year alone.

In fact, at certain schools, more kids were discharged than received their diplomas.

Gotbaum and the AFC suggest that an analysis of the data they've compiled is needed in order to understand the extent of the problem and craft appropriate solutions. The Advancement Project and the Harvard University Civil Rights Project determined that they had enough data to make recommendations for alternatives and adjustments to zero tolerance policies.

In fact, the Advancement Project calls for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights to monitor schools receiving federal aid for possible denial of students' civil rights. It is also necessary to track data on the race and disability status of affected children, conduct compliance reviews and investigations to ensure that children are not discriminated against in the adoption or application of disciplinary policies, and more. States are also urged to pass legislation permitting advocates to represent students in due process hearings, among other things.

Last but certainly not least on their list is a recommendation for greater involvement by parents, school reform and civil rights groups insisting that "all policies and procedures reflect fair process and sound principles based on schooling goals rather than crime-fighting strategies."

In many cases, Brown says, alternative steps can be taken before students are put on the track that leads them from schoolhouse to jailhouse the way zero tolerance policies are prone to do. Says Brown: "This runaway train must be stopped."

This article was originally printed in the Amsterdam News.

DEBATE THE NEWS AT NYC.INDYMEDIA.ORG

BRUCE RATNER'S BROOKLYN TAIL

UNPOPULAR DEVELOPMENT HIDES IN SHADOW OF THE NETS

BY TRACY NORTON

After months of bidding wars, real estate mogul Bruce Ratner has finally purchased the New Jersey Nets. The \$300 million dollar deal with the current owners now awaits the approval of at least three-quarters of NBA team owners. However, Ratner's greatest opposition is to his plans to move the team to Brooklyn.

Not only does the billionaire developer plan to build an arena for his team, his vision also includes 17 commercial, office and residential high-rises that will knock out several blocks of homes and businesses in Prospect Heights.

Many are beginning to see the stadium as nothing more than a way to get Brooklyn rooting so the rest of the development can slip in unnoticed. Area Councilwoman Leticia James, a vehement opponent of the plan, notes, "No one would go rah rah for a development like this if the arena weren't part of it."

The massive development will be dropped between several residential areas where brownstones easily sell for \$1.2 million. Claims of "knitting" together the communities with high-rises are dubious; high walls rarely make for good block parties, and chain stores are known for taking money out of neighborhoods.

Develop Don't Destroy, a group representing area residents at risk of losing their homes, has proposed a compromise. Ratner could tear down his Atlantic Center Mall property — an architectural scar on the community — instead of homes.

In addition to millions in tax abatements and road repairs, Atlantic Center Mall currently receives millions in rent from the state for the

Department of Motor Vehicles and Empire State Development Corp., which stepped in when no one else would rent the spaces. Many Brooklynites are asking why residents should sacrifice their homes and community while Ratner surrenders nothing.

The scale of the buildings set to surround the stadium is also controversial. While many Brooklyn residents enjoy living here because of the absence of looming towers, the proposed buildings will exceed the height of the Williamsburg Savings Bank. Additional development will be necessary for financial success, but according to many experts, stadiums divert money away from the local economy and create almost no new tax revenue.

Ratner has also had his hand in the development of Atlantic Commons, a set of three-story row houses near the development site. Councilwoman James, an opponent of the current Atlantic Yards plan, sees this kind of development as exactly what Brooklyn needs: mixed incomes and ethnicities on a human scale. Homes and gardens are the dream of many city dwellers, not cold towers and the sounds of the unknown neighbor upstairs.

The implications of a professional team returning to Brooklyn may give sports fans chills, but the implications of a development that will rip down 1,000+ taxpayer homes, destroy jobs, require millions in funding from taxes present and future, and literally and figuratively dwarf beloved and successful communities — all of this gets other Brooklynites heated.

For more information: www.nostadium.homestead.com.

GET A GRIP BROOKLYN WANTS A HOMETOWN TEAM

BY DOUBLE DRIBBLE

The Nets are coming to Brooklyn? Bring 'em on. The Nets and the Knicks competing in the same conference. Jason Kidd vs. Stephon Marbury. This is going to be better than the Yankees vs. the Mets or the Giants vs. the Jets. And it's certainly way more exciting than possibly being the host of the 2012 Olympics. Like who gives a fuck about field hockey, archery, synchronized swimming and all those other sports that no one ever plays?

Basketball is the people's sport. And if backwater towns like Memphis, Milwaukee, Sacramento and Salt Lake City can have NBA teams shouldn't we be allowed to have two? And no, this isn't going to be like the Lakers and the Clippers when a really lame team moved into a city that already belonged to a team that was a perennial championship contender.

In fact, it's the Nets who have made it to the NBA finals each of the last two years while Brooklyn has been waiting more than 40 years for a big-league team to return. And guess who is in first place in their division again this year? This should happen. It's our turn.

Change by its nature is disruptive but that doesn't always mean its bad. The neighborhood critics say a thousand people are going to be displaced by this. Developer Bruce Ratner says it's more like

COMMENTS FROM NYC.INDYMEDIA.ORG

MORON...

by b-ball fan

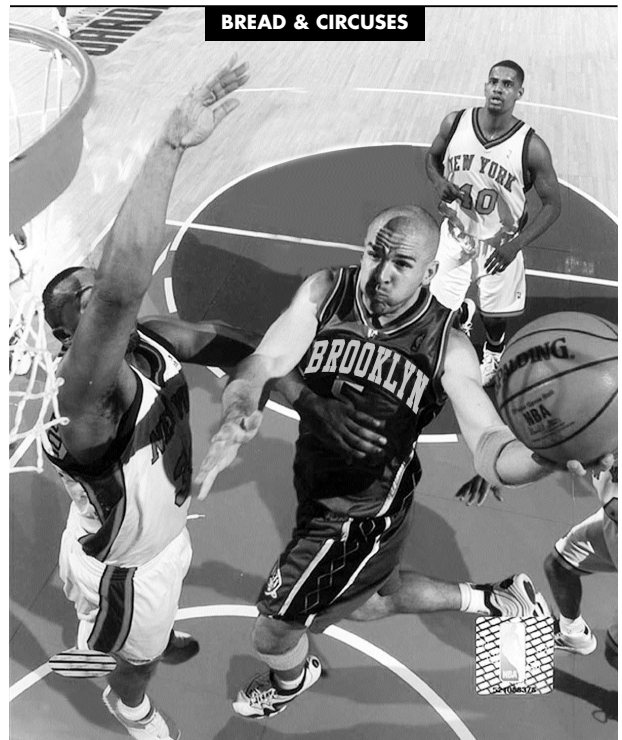
By the time this is all said and done, neither marbury nor Kidd will be on their present teams, if they are even still in the nba. this is a dumb idea, more gentrification in brooklyn, bring in an unnecessary stadium and its shit minimum wage jobs and create yet another area of nyc where ordinary people can't afford to live. i notice a pattern here...

RE: BRING THE NETS TO BROOKLYN

by Clandestino

Nets games have never been well attended, not since Dr. J played for them and they were playing in Long Island. That they're going to be moving into a place where Knicks have always ruled the roost (in fact, only one of two teams that began the NBA that stayed in its home city, along with the Boston Celtics), and I think you'll be hard pressed to say that any Knicks fans are about to convert their loyalties... If anything the Nets are going from the frying pan into the fire - there's already plenty of New Jersey fans of the Knicks; let's just see what happens when they go into the heart of the Knick country.

100. So who do you believe? Whatever the number, the folks in Prospect Heights should demand and receive fair compensation from Ratner and the city for their troubles. It should be enough to ensure that they are able to live in some other equally attractive Brooklyn neighborhood. And yes maybe some of the office buildings they're complaining about should be scaled back. But that doesn't mean the dream should be scrapped or that these people should be able to put their narrow interests before the greater happiness of two million basketball-loving Brooklynites.



FULL COURT PRESS: Borough residents are split over impact of stadium development versus the possibility of a hometown team. ILLUSTRATION: Ryan Dunsmuir

THE GRAY LADY HAS NO SHAME

THE TIMES BEDS DOWN WITH STADIUM DEVELOPER IN APPARENT CONFLICT OF INTEREST, SAY CRITICS

BY CHRIS ANDERSON

In *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*, Robert Caro notes that while the New York Times may never have ordered its writers to give Moses special treatment, "its reporters and editors... were not so insensitive as not to know what was expected of them." Caro writes that the Times "ran more than one hundred editorials on the developer and his programs during the twelve-year LaGuardia administration," most of them "overwhelmingly favorable." A few less diplomatic historians have called the New York Times the "propaganda-arm" of the Robert Moses urban development machine.

Bruce Ratner, the new owner of the New Jersey Nets and soon-to-be-scurge of Prospect Heights, is no Robert Moses — at least not yet. But he might be hoping to get similar treatment from the Times. You see, Ratner and the Times are business partners; Forest City Ratner, Ratner's real estate company, is currently the lead developer of the New York Times' controversial new office tower on 40th Street and 8th Avenue. After repeatedly assuring funders and the city that the development would not require public subsidies, Ratner is now threatening to delay construction on the Times tower until he receives public financing for the project in the form of Liberty Bonds. Speculation is rampant that the tower, half of which will be owned by Ratner, will be a financial dud if it ever gets finished.

In effect, the new owner of the Nets is the New York Times Corporation's most trusted real estate partner. With Ratner as the primary dealmaker on the Brooklyn arena, can New Yorkers be naïve enough to assume that the paper will cover the Nets story honestly? It's hard to believe. The sycophantic quality of the Times' arena coverage, meanwhile, hasn't inspired much confidence — while the paper hasn't hidden its relationship with Ratner, it hasn't gone around trumpeting it, either.

Much of the Times Ratner coverage has come from sources not known for their muckraking journalism. In July 2003, long before the Ratner arena plan ever became public, the New York Post wrote that the Times and Ratner "are partners in every sense on the [Times Square] tower project, and Times Co. and Ratner officials have by some accounts forged a remarkably warm bond." New York Daily News sports correspondent Mike Lupica has been especially critical of the Brooklyn plan, noting in his Jan. 22 column that "The New York Times covered the Nets news the way a good real estate partner should... The Nets are just part of the game here, folded inside a much bigger game about the housing that Ratner and his partners will build around the new arena, and the 21 acres in downtown Brooklyn that Ratner and his partners will be acquiring in this deal."

Like most everything else in professional sports these days, the over-hyped plans to move the Nets to Prospect Heights seem to amount to little more than one cog in a crafty business plan. And it might be Bruce Ratner's corporate connections — most notably, his relationship with the New York Times — that will help make his Brooklyn dreams become a reality.

S.O.S. – SAVE OUR SOY

MONSANTO CAMPAIGNS FOR GMOS IN BRAZIL



BY PABLO ORTELLADO

Biotech corporation Monsanto is spending \$2 million to convince Brazilians that genetically modified food is good for them and the environment. Targeted at housewives and students, the campaign aims at breaking down public resistance to genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

“Housewives are important because they decide what the family buys, and students are future opinion makers,” says Monsanto’s director of communication Lúcio Mocsányi. Monsanto’s TV commercial presents idyllic images of children playing on a farm while Louis Armstrong sings “What a wonderful world.” A female narrator chirps: “Imagine a world that preserves nature, the air and the rivers; where people can produce more with less herbicides, without deforesting. “Imagine a world with more and better food and people with more health. Can you imagine it? Bet you never thought that GMOs could help us with that.”

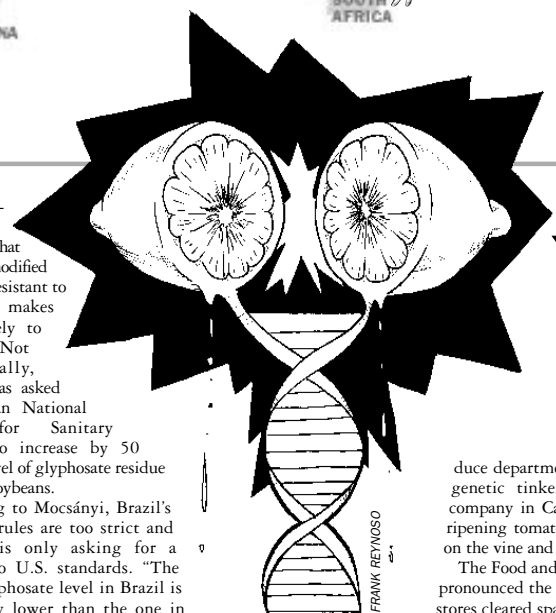
The campaign is the latest move from Monsanto, which has lobbied intensely for the legalization of GMOs. Monsanto wants to first overcome the public’s aversion to genetically modified organisms. Opinion polls show that 65 percent of Brazilians are against the production of GMOs and 71 percent would rather not eat food with genetically modified ingredients. While the public still shuns GMO crops, Monsanto and soy farmers have already successfully pressured the Brazilian legislature to legalize genetically modified soy. GMO production had been prohibited in Brazil since 1998 when consumer organizations filed a lawsuit arguing that production should only be allowed after it was determined conclusively that such crops were safe for humans and the environment. In early 2003, however, soy producers from southern Brazil pressured the federal government to legalize the production of the genetically modified crop, alleging that much of Brazil’s soy had already been illegally converted to Monsanto’s genetically modified Roundup Ready variety. A national seminar discussing GMOs in March 2003 gathered together 85 civil society organizations and accused Monsanto of turning a blind eye to the widespread smuggling of genetically modified soy seeds from Argentina. According to a document presented at the seminar, Monsanto deliberately kept loose controls on Roundup Ready soy seeds sold in Argentina in order to facilitate distribution of the seeds in Brazil. “This attitude seems to be part of a deliberate strategy to contaminate Brazilian soy production and create a de facto situation to knock down national legislation controlling its products,” the document states.

As a result, with up to one-third of the soy crop contaminated last year, Brazil’s government caved in to the pressure to legalize the harvest. Large farms and Monsanto celebrated the decision while landless workers, small farmers, and environment and consumer organizations demonstrated. Greenpeace organized supermarket protests against genetically modified products. Via Campesina, an international coalition of peasant movements, camped for 61 days in Brasilia protesting the legalization of GMOs. But despite these efforts, Monsanto and farmers successfully lobbied again in September to have the precedent extended to the next harvest. Unlike the United States, where White House officials are connected to biotech companies (Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman was a director of Calgene, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was formerly president of Monsanto subsidiary Searle Pharmaceuticals and Director of Management and Budget Office Mitch Daniels was vice president of Monsanto’s partner Eli Lilly & Company), government officials in Brazil have strong links to consumer and environment groups. The conservative magazine *Veja* denounced Marijane Lisboa, an adviser to the Minister of Environment, and Secretary of Agrarian Reform Miguel Rosetto for their activism against genetically modified plants. And during his presidential campaign, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva publicly promised Greenpeace that he would not legalize GMOs. Nevertheless, the Workers’ Party government reversed its position. Now, the availability of traditional soy in the world market will be drastically reduced (the other main producers, the United States, Argentina and China, already grow GM soy). The next stage in Monsanto’s campaign is to convert most of Brazil’s soy production to its genetically modified variety. Maria Carrascosa, an agronomist working with biodiversity recovery in Rio de Janeiro, observes that not only is the introduction of GMOs an issue of health, environmental safety and economic productivity, but it also affects the autonomy of the small farmer. “By using Monsanto’s Roundup Ready soy seeds, the farmer is contractually bound not to use the grown seeds to sow the next harvest. He is obliged to not buy only new seeds from Monsanto but to buy also Monsanto’s Roundup herbicide. This generates a cycle of dependency on corporations.” As part of its new advertising blitz,



Monsanto argues that genetically modified soy is more productive, requires less herbicides, and will produce safer soybeans. Monsanto spokesperson Lúcio Mocsányi claims studies from the Argentinean government have shown that the introduction of GM soy in the country was responsible for a considerable reduction in production costs. The introduction of “genetically modified soy led to a reduction of 20 to 25 dollars per hectare in the costs of production and a rise in Argentinean soy exports,” says Mocsányi. A technical study made by the Brazilian Worker’s Party, however, argues that traditional soy is more productive than its genetically modified cousin. “While [in Brazil] traditional soy has shown gains in productivity, in the United States, Roundup Ready soy has shown the opposite,” the report states. From 1996, when the United States began producing genetically modified soy, to 2002, U.S. production grew only 1.8 percent annually while Brazil’s traditional production grew 8.8 percent annually. In the same period, Brazilian productivity per hectare increased 1.91 percent while U.S. productivity decreased 0.04 percent. A coalition of grassroots organizations, under the banner, “Brazil Free of GMOs,” also takes issue with Monsanto’s contention that its GM soy requires less pesticides. The coalition has pointed out that the use of herbicides has risen with the growth of genetically modified soy. “In the past years, consumption of glyphosate (the active ingredient in Roundup herbicide) in Rio Grande do Sul almost tripled – during the very same period in which the growth of genetically modified soy spread in the state.”

The bulletin argues that the fact that genetically modified soy is more resistant to glyphosate makes farmers likely to abuse it. Not coincidentally, Monsanto has asked the Brazilian National Agency for Sanitary Vigilance to increase by 50 times the level of glyphosate residue allowed in soybeans. According to Mocsányi, Brazil’s glyphosate rules are too strict and Monsanto is only asking for a reduction to U.S. standards. “The allowed glyphosate level in Brazil is significantly lower than the one in the United States where genetically modified soy has been grown for eight years.” Mocsányi also argues that the high level of glyphosate in Rio Grande do Sul is due to the expansion of farming in the area. In the end, the controversy over GMOs is a battle of scientific information. Monsanto’s website cites dozens of studies arguing that GMOs are safe. An open letter from the Brazil Free of GMOs coalition responds by pointing to independent scientific studies. Critics of GMOs say that with the controversy surrounding the product, society should follow the “precautionary principle:” When there are serious doubts about safety, a new technology should not be adopted.



YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

BY CAROLYN SZCZEPANSKI

The “Flavr Savr” tomato was supposed to be the pick of the produce department. In 1994, after a decade of genetic tinkering, a small biotechnology company in California introduced a delayed-ripening tomato that could be left to mature on the vine and resist bruising while in transit. The Food and Drug Administration quickly pronounced the product safe. More than 2,000 stores cleared space on their shelves. But, when the seemingly perfect tomato made its debut, consumers balked at the costly, tasteless red globes, and the product was recalled in less than a year. The failure of the Flavr Savr did not save consumers from a bumper crop of genetically engineered foods. In the past ten years, GE corn and soybeans have spread across the country so quick that more than 70 percent of products on grocery store shelves contain ingredients derived from GE crops. And industry experts boast corn and soy are just the beginning of the biotech revolution. But, as 2004 marks the tenth anniversary of the commercial adoption of GE foods, recent reports confirm that biotechnology is continuing to advance across the globe, increasing corporate dominance, threatening environmental health and spurring a global resistance movement. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 40 percent of the corn and 81 percent of the soybeans grown in the United States in 2003 were genetically engineered. In January,

the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications, an industry-funded group, reported that more than 7 million farmers in 18 countries cultivated GE crops last year. The group touted a 28 percent increase in acreage in developing countries and an 11 percent jump in industrialized nations, and heralded further growth in 2004. While biotech once faced firm international opposition, governmental barriers are starting to fall. In May 2003, the United States made good on its threat to file a lawsuit in the World Trade Organization against the European Union for an “illegal, non-science based moratorium [on GE foods], which is harmful to agriculture and the developing world.” With that case pending, in January Australia approved the use of Monsanto’s genetically modified canola. Germany announced it will allow the cultivation and sale of GE crops under certain regulatory conditions. Even the United Kingdom, a hotbed of public resistance that spurred a four-year moratorium on GE products, announced it will approve the commercial growing of such crops in February. Though acreage is expanding, profits are concentrating in the hands of a few transnational corporations, according to a December 2003 report from the Canada-based Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration. In 2002, the top ten seed corporations took in more than \$7 billion in sales or 31 percent of industry revenues, ETC said, and, currently, Monsanto and Dupont alone control 65 percent of the global maize market and 44 percent of the soybean sector. And the spread of biotechnology will only enhance their dominance, ETC warned. For instance, in 2003, 19 of Dupont’s 23 new soybean varieties contained a biotech trait, and, in an effort to continue to lead the industry, Monsanto will allocate a full 80 percent of its research budget in 2004 for biotech seeds.

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOODS ALLOWED IN THE US FOOD SUPPLY

(UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS)

PRODUCT	INSTITUTION(S)	NAME
Canola	Bayer	LibertyLink 2000
Canola	Monsanto	Roundup Ready1999
Canola	Monsanto	Laurical 1995
Canola	Bayer	SeedLink 2000
Chicory (radicchio)	Bejo Zaden	SeedLink 1997
Corn	Bayer	SeedLink Date unknown
Corn	Bayer	LibertyLink Date unknown
Corn	Bayer	StarLink 1998 (approved only for animal feed)
Corn	Dow/Mycogen	NatureGard 1995
Corn	Dow/Mycogen	Herculex I 2001
Corn	DuPont/Pioneer	
Corn	Monsanto/DeKalb	Bt-Xtra 1997
Corn	Monsanto	YieldGard 1996
Corn	Monsanto	Roundup Ready 1998
Corn	Syngenta	Bt11 1996
Corn	Syngenta	Knock Out 1995
Corn (pop)	Syngenta	Knock Out 1998
Corn (sweet)	Syngenta	Bt11 1998
Cotton	Monsanto/Bayer	Name unknown 1998
Cotton	Monsanto/Bayer	BXN Cotton 1995
Cotton	Monsanto	Bollgard 1995
Cotton	Monsanto	Roundup Ready 1996
Flax	Univ Saskatchewan	CDC Triffid 1999
Papaya	Cornell Univ/Univ Hawaii	Sunup, Rainbow 1997
Potato	Monsanto	NewLeaf 1995
Potato	Monsanto	NewLeaf Y 1999
Potato	Monsanto	NewLeaf Plus s1998
Soybean	Bayer	Name unknown 1998
Soybean	DuPont	Name unknown 1997
Soybean	Monsanto	Roundup Ready 1995
Squash	Seminis	Freedom II 1995
Squash	Seminis	Name unknown 1997
Sugarbeet	Bayer	Name unknown 2000
Sugarbeet	Monsanto/Syngenta	Name unknown 1999
Tomato (cherry)	Agritope	Name unknown 1996
Tomato	DNA Plant Technology	Endless Summer 1995
Tomato	Monsanto/ Calgene	FlavrSavr 1994
Tomato	Monsanto	Name unknown 1995
Tomato	Zeneca/ PetoSeed	Name unknown 1995

WORLD IN BRIEF

U.S. UNDERMINES WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN IRAQ

On Dec. 29 the U.S.-appointed Iraqi governing council voted to give control over family law matters to religious authorities, erasing what was, at the time of its enactment, one of the most progressive civil codes in the Middle East. Under the ruling, clergymen would decide issues of divorce, child custody and property inheritance according to religious doctrine. Islamic law, or Sharia, permits men to divorce their wives unilaterally and take up to four wives, gives men custody of children after divorce, permits child marriages and requires family approval for any woman to marry. The change still awaits the approval of Paul Bremer, the U.S. administrator of Iraq. It is seen as an inducement to Iraqi religious leaders to back the projected transition to self-rule in June.

WASHINGTON INSIDERS SPECULATE ON NEXT TERRORIST ATTACK

A variety of government officials and media personae are suggesting that a terrorist attack could clinch Bush's re-election hopes. Conservative NY Times columnist William Safire predicted on Dec. 31 that a "major terrorist attack" in 2004 would act as Bush's "October Surprise."

Meanwhile, recently retired U.S. General Tommy Franks has speculated on a military government being installed in the event of such an attack. And on Jan. 13 media maven Steven Brill hosted a dinner for Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, the Chairman of Fox News, the presidents of ABC News and CBS News, and news anchors Aaron Brown, Peter Jennings and Tom Brokaw, reportedly to discuss how the next terrorist attack would be handled.

DEBATE THE NEWS:
nyc.indymedia.org



WORLD SOCIAL FORUM MEETS IN MUMBAI GLOBALIZATION FROM BELOW

BY SHIVANI CHAUDHRY

Dust. Drums. Slogans. Songs. Posters. Pamphlets. Chants. Colors. People. Masses of people. People of different nations, different clothing, different accents, different languages, different ideas. All covered in the same dust. All cloaked with the same hope. All there with the same vision — of a better world. Some day. Already?

Yes, this is what you witnessed when you entered the NESCO grounds in Goregaon East, Mumbai, India — the venue of the fourth World Social Forum (WSF). The first WSF outside Porto Alegre, Brazil. The first WSF in Asia. The first WSF in India.

An Indian newspaper called the meeting an "anti-global event." With more than 120 countries participating, could an event be more global in nature? "Anti-globalization" is another term often and erroneously used to describe the WSF. This is just another form of globalization. A counter-globalization. A globalization that challenges the prevalent neo-imperial corporate globalization agenda. A globalization from below. A globalization of struggles. A globalization of resistance. A globalization of movements, of activism, of defiance. A globalization of hope.

I like to believe the Forum is an open space. Some would disagree. Like those who formed Mumbai Resistance. Yes, the WSF keeps some people out, officially. Like those involved in armed struggle. Because one of

its charters is about nonviolence. Yet, it allows everyone to come there. To share a platform. To raise a voice. To launch an idea. To build a movement. To generate solidarity. To challenge hegemony. To defy imperialism. And even to question the WSF.

"There were no concrete outcomes," complained many critics. Yes, there were no formal declarations passed; who needs more of those? But there were hundreds of outcomes. The forging of people-to-people bonds. The uniting of struggles. The building of bridges. The strengthening of solidarity. The shaping of new alliances, new coalitions, new relationships. The articulation of alternatives. These are all outcomes. Intangible perhaps, but valuable outcomes nonetheless.

This year's forum was challenging. Mumbai, a teeming city of almost 20 million, has some of the world's worst inequality and urban poverty. The inhumanity of Mumbai's poor hits you, hard. All the time. On the streets. On the sidewalks. Right outside the Forum venue. Participants saw the poorest of the poor, everyday, and winced. For many, poverty was no longer a word in development literature. It was breathing right in front of you. The feeling of horror reverberated among many who had never seen suffering of this magnitude before. You couldn't talk any more in workshops about the abstract poor. No, they had faces, and bony bodies. They were living reminders of the need for this "other world"

we were fighting for. In some way, along with so many others, they made the Forum seem more real, more urgent, more critical.

The WSF was not an isolated event. It was challenged by the Mumbai Resistance — a separate event held by those who felt the WSF was exclusionary and compromised. Across the highway, several organizations and people often referred to as the "extreme left" rallied to discuss many of the same issues but under a different banner. Other parallel but not challenging events were the Land First Mela — an event devoted to the creation of a stronger land rights movement, and the conference of Via Campesina — an international network of peasant organizations, agricultural workers, and indigenous communities. Events attended by many who also participated in the WSF. Events that chose separate spaces for logistic and other conveniences. Events that were all spokes in the wheel of the alternative vehicle we're engaged in building.

Like at the last Forum, the anti-war message was loud; louder in fact. The anti-Bush sentiment, even stronger. A popular poster read "When Bush Comes to Shove — Resist." Some felt the anti-Bush stance dominated the Forum. It might have dominated a lot of the media attention. But there was much more to the Forum than that. The participation of social movements in this year's forum was incredible. The role of women, unprecedented. The range of workshop topics, mind-blowing. And the spirit, soul-stirring.

If democracy lives in India, you can feel it in the vibrant culture of resistance. It was the pulse of the WSF. Some march or the other was constantly going on. These were not just protests for the sake of protesting. These were rallies of people with ideas, with histories, with stories, with sufferings, with victories and with visions. Victims, winners, survivors, fighters. All dreamers. All praxis-builders.

From Bhopal gas victims to Hiroshima survivors, from Narmada dam oustees to North American peaceniks, from Dalits to disabled-rights advocates, from South Korean socialists to South African AIDS activists, from Peruvian peasants to Pakistani anti-nuclear activists, from Brazilian landless workers to Bombay slum dwellers, from queer rights activists to child labor abolishes, from theologians to trade unionists, from feminists to free Palestine crusaders, from anti-Coca Cola campaigners to cotton farmers... the Forum offered space for expression, for exchange, for discussion, for disagreement, for debate, for celebration.

I can still hear the reverberating chants. I can still taste the dust. I can feel the passion and power of the 100,000 people who, like me, came to breathe in another space. I can picture new dreams being created. I can visualize the outline of the other world emerging on tomorrow's sunlit morning sky.

Maybe this sounds idealistic. But this is just what Someone felt about the WSF.

For more information, www.india.indymedia.org.

*If democracy
lives in India,
you can feel
it in the vibrant
culture of
resistance.*

WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF THE INDYPENDENT?

A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

BELOW 14TH ST.

ABC No Rio
156 Rivington
Bluestockings Books & Café
172 Allen
Lotus Café
Clinton & Stanton
6th St. Community Center
638 E. 6th St.
Alt.Coffee
139 Ave. A (btw. 8th and 9th)
May Day Books
155 First Ave. (btw. 9th and 10th)
Kim's Video
3rd Ave. & St. Marks
Housing Works
126 Crosby St.
LGBT Center
213 W. 13th St.
TLA Video
8th St. btw. 6th Ave. & Broadway

14TH TO 96TH ST.

Revolution Books
9 W. 19th St.
Chelsea Sq. Diner
23rd & 9th St.
Brecht Forum
122 W. 27th, Fl. 10
Second Wave Laundrocenter
55th & 9th Ave.
Hunter College (USG Office)
68th & Lex. (N 141)
ABOVE 96TH ST.
Labyrinth Books
536 W. 112th St.
Kim's Books
113th & Broadway
Strictly Roots Restaurant
123rd & Adam Clayton Powell
Green Chinneys
450 W. 145th St.
Fort Washington Bakery & Deli
808 W. 181 St.

Jumpin' Jalapenos

W. 207th St (Between Broadway & Vermilya)
Cafe Seven
7 Henshaw St.
BROOKLYN
Tillie's of Brooklyn
248 Dekalb Ave.
Green Apple Café
110 Dekalb Ave.
Marquet Patisserie
680 Fulton St.
Halcyon
227 Smith St.
Freddy's Bar and Backroom
Dean & 6th Ave.
BAM
30 Lafayette Ave
Community Book Store
7th & Carroll Sts.
Tea Lounge
Union St. @ 7th Ave.

Atlantis Super Laundry Center

472 Atlantic Ave.
Photoplay Video
933 Manhattan Ave
Clovis Books
4th St. & N. Bedford Ave.
Jane Doe Books
93 Montrose Ave.
Make the Road by Walking
301 Grove St.

QUEENS

Sunnyside Library
43-06 Greenpoint Ave.
East Elmhurst Library
95-06 Astoria Blvd.
Jackson Heights Library
35-51 81 St.
Friend's Tavern
78-11 Roosevelt Ave.
Langston Hughes Library
100-01 Northern Blvd.
Cafe Aubergine
49-22 Skillman Ave.

Sunnyside Library

43-06 Greenpoint Ave.

BRONX

South Bronx Clean Air Coalition
541-549 E 138th St.
The Point
940 Garrison Ave.

JERSEY CITY

Five Corners Public Library
678 Newark Ave.
Downtown Public Library
472 Jersey Ave.
Ground Coffee Shop
530 Jersey Ave.

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BY DAVID ENDERS

ABU GRAIB PRISON, BAGHDAD – This massive prison on the southwest edge of Baghdad dwarfs the small dwellings in the surrounding farming community and was once Saddam Hussein's most feared detention center. It has new occupants and has been renamed "Baghdad Correctional Facility" but things are very much the same as before – family members of those detained inside wait anxiously in front of the prison gate, standing in line for hours for news of their loved ones. The road from the visitors' parking lot is a humiliating and muddy slog of a few hundred meters, but lawyers and family make the trek to be met by U.S. military police at the gate who tell them only 20 visits are allowed five days a week. Two days out of the week are for lawyers only.

"They told me to come back in four months," said one man as he walked away from the prison. "My son has already been in there for four months and he has been charged with nothing! It was easier to get a visit under Saddam!"

Rory McKewan, an independent Scottish documentary maker, has come to the prison trying to locate his friend Yunis. Yunis is a cameraman who was arrested during a raid on his house in the Al-Adamiyah neighborhood in north Baghdad.



KAFKA IN BAGHDAD

IRAQI DETAINEES LOST IN PRISON MAZE

A chunky MP ignores the Iraqis who approach the gate with us and speaks to Rory and me, a pair of Westerners.

"How do we request a visit with a prisoner?" Rory asks.

"Do you have the prisoner's number?" "Yes."

The MP looks surprised. It is impossible to get a visit without knowing the prisoner's number, and many families are unable to find out the numbers – either they are not provided by arresting soldiers or they are not available on lists given to Iraqi offices or misspellings of names during capture and cataloging prevent a family from even approximating where their relative might be.

Yunis' family received his number when another man in the prison who is from Yunis' neighborhood was released. Before being released, he wrote down the numbers and locations of many men he knew. This is how many families find out the numbers of their detained relatives, written on scraps of cloth torn from the prison yard tents.

"You can stand in line with everyone else and wait to fill out a form," the MP says.

More than 100 people are already in line, and it is only 10 a.m.

Yunis, along with his brothers, Abbas, and Khalid, are three of the approximately 5,000 detainees the Coalition Provisional Authority admits to holding, though many suspect the real number is twice that. Virtually all are being held indefinitely and without charges – they are "suspected terrorists."

Many of the families have traveled to multiple prisons across the country, searching for news. The trip from the detainment facility in Tikrit in the north to Camp Bucca in Umm Qasr in the south takes 11 hours by car, and prisoners are moved often. Transliterated names, often spelled incorrectly, can also make it hard to track someone down. In trying to track down Yunis and his brothers, McKewan made visits to various Coalition and military offices but eventually located Khalid's number at the Al-Adamiyah mayor's office. The num-

bers for Yunis and Abbas were not on the list.

"The Americans have no system – he might be in Abu Ghraib, he might be in Umm Qasr," says Saeed Al-Hammashe, the head of the Baghdad Lawyers Association and the deputy president of the Higher National Committee on Human Rights, a local group.

Al-Hammashe says he has taken on 20 cases of men detained by the Americans and that he has been unsuccessful in freeing any of them or even receiving disclosure papers regarding the reasons they were arrested.

"It's a runaround – only one person I know has succeeded in getting anyone out, using personal friendships," Al-Hammashe says.

There are two systems operating in the country – some of those arrested are sent to jails run by Iraqi police, while others are taken to U.S.-run installations. Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, who commands U.S. troops in Iraq, says the Coalition is working to put more of its detainees into the legal system, but thus far it has been a trickle.

"At the Iraqi police station it is very easy – we have a system. There is a judge, there are police, there is a lawyer," Al-Hammashe says. "But what [the Americans] are doing is illegal – they're using military law against civilian people."

U.S. press reports put the number of detainees at 11,000.

Al-Hammashe estimates the number of detainees to be around 20,000. The mayor's office in the Al-Adamiyah says the number is likely as high as 50,000.

"We suspect there are two lists," says Matt Chandler of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), a U.S.-based non-governmental organization.

CPT is also raising questions about the treatment of prisoners after interviewing prisoners who report being tortured – having toenails pulled out or being beaten, starved, or left in intense summer heat without shade. The full report, along with thorough descriptions of prison conditions and raids, is available on the CPT website (www.cpt.org).

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the only organization with access to the detainment camps and a mandate for monitoring the conditions, has drastically reduced its presence following the car bombing at their Baghdad headquarters last September. The effectiveness of the ICRC was in question to begin with. In June, an ICRC employee in Baghdad said there were camps within the country to which even the ICRC did not have access.

All fear the worst when their relatives are detained. One man said he went to Abu Ghraib and was told his son had died in custody, but no one notified the family. Reportedly, the translator who told the man his son was dead was then reprimanded by a nearby U.S. commander, who told the translator he should have told the man his son had been "released."

Families are growing used to the separation as the detainees stretch for months with little information. Eid Al-Fitr, the feasting holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, is normally a festive event, but for many, it was subdued, especially in Al-Adamiyah, where Yunis is from. The neighborhood is a center of resistance and has been subjected to frequent raids.

The family suspects Yunis was arrested because he had been making frequent trips to film in Faluja, about 50 kilometers west of Baghdad and another site of frequent resistance against American troops. Khaymer says one of the neighbors probably told troops Yunis had been going to Faluja. Though the U.S. military refuses to confirm or deny these reports, many Iraqis say informants are paid by the military, which often acts on tips without finding out whether they are legitimate or in some cases, people simply trying to settle grudges. In June in Dhuloiya, a village about 40 to 25 miles north of Baghdad, nearly 400 men were arrested in one operation.

David Enders writes for *Global Exchange* and the *Occupation Watch Center* in Baghdad.

VENDOR TERROR

continued from the cover

others went to use the toilet. I was tired and weak, but I couldn't sleep. The others seemed resigned to the petty abuse.

Jerry from Belfast told me, "If they find that someone is illegal they don't report it to immigration. They need us here and they need us to stay illegal. Who will do the dirty work if we won't be here?"

The court opened at 9 a.m., causing a commotion. Everyone woke up, hoping to be one of the first to see the judge. One guard said: "If you have a private lawyer, you're out of here in no time. But if you can't pay, you can stay here for 72 hours for all I and the court care."

There was one judge for 150 men. My name was called at 11:30 a.m. I became hopeful that my ordeal would soon be over but it just got worse.

I was escorted upstairs where there were two small cells with 30 people crowded into each one. The tension was palpable. These men were the "real criminals." They all looked tired and afraid.

Time passed by without any food. Someone yelled, "Feed us! Feed us!" A visibly angry guard showed up, opened the other cell and forced everyone to move into our cell. "You really pissed me off now, and if I hear you again you're all going back downstairs!" We were 60 people in the cell now, and half had to stand up.

I passed the time by listening to the other men tell their stories. Two I will always remember.

A 50-year-old man said that he was caught smoking a joint in his car. He was also being charged with possession of a lethal weapon – a pocketknife he had in the glove compartment. Because he was already a convicted felon, he was looking at a sentence of two to four years. The man was devastated and kept repeating, "I can't go for two years now. It will ruin my family, my career, my life." There was nothing I could say to comfort him.

I talked to an 18-year-old kid from the Bronx who was arrested for jumping a subway turnstile. He tried to run away but the cops grabbed him and beat him up. So now he was being charged with assaulting an officer. His lawyer said he would go to prison for years. It was just his word against the cops and he knew no one would believe him. He sat down and gazed at the wall silently until the guard took him back downstairs.

A new guard came. He took the Chinese man to see a translator, mocking them with Chinese-like sounds when he called them. "I can't understand your names," he said. The guard left and when he came back he told the French-speaking Africans that there was no translator for them so they would have to stay another night in jail, much to their disbelief.

I finally saw the judge at 7:30 p.m. Before me, a young man was sentenced to 10 days for stealing a can of soda and another man received 45 days for shoplifting food from a deli.

I listened to my lawyer explaining how my case was mishandled, but I didn't care. I just wanted to go home. I got the feeling that my lawyer wanted to go home, too. He lost the case. Actually, he lost everybody's case. I got a \$90 fine and a day of community service. Once it was over, I was out of there. Just like that.

It had been about 30 hours since I was arrested. I thought about the hell I had been put through. And that no one sees this hidden system oppressing the most vulnerable people. Every day, all year around.

PAST PERFECT

BEWARE OF CANDIDATE BIOS

BY JOHN TARLETON

Howard Dean likes to remind audiences that he was a family doctor before becoming governor of Vermont. John Edwards fondly recalls how he was a mill worker's son before becoming a millionaire trial lawyer and a senator. Al Sharpton was ordained as a minister at the age of 10 and later worked as James Brown's road manager. John Kerry campaigns alongside the buddies he fought with in Vietnam while retired four-star Gen. Wesley Clark busts Kerry's chops for only being a lieutenant.

The modern American presidency is shrouded in awe and mystique. But the biographies of this year's candidates raise an interesting question – what on earth prepares someone to hold such a job?

The past offers no certain guide. The current president is a failed businessman (many times over) and a recovering alcoholic. Bush's father was an oilman and a former CIA director. Ronald Reagan was a B-movie actor while Jimmy Carter was a nuclear submarine captain and later a peanut farmer. John Kennedy was our last "war hero" president, and Dwight Eisenhower the last general to sit in the Oval Office. Harry Truman – the man who dropped the first atomic bomb – was a bank clerk, a farmer and a failed hard-dasher before going into politics in his late thirties.

Being a war hero didn't help presidential candidates much in the quiet decade after the end of the Cold War. Just ask Bob Kerrey (1992), Bob Dole (1996) or John McCain (2000). But now, war heroes are back in full vogue. While Bush prances around in his flight suit, Democrats say they have the real thing in John Kerry.

Is this healthy? And will Kerry's military reputation (silver star, bronze star and three purple hearts) even survive a run through the Republican shredder?

In most electoral democracies (Israel being a notable exception), a candidate's past military service is of little or no interest. After all, what does fighting in a war in your late teens or early twenties have to do with administering an enormously complex and confusing bureaucracy or guiding foreign relations with over 190 nations in an increasingly interconnected world? Interestingly enough, Kerry wasn't always so enthusiastic about his military service.

Testifying before Congress in 1971, Kerry called the Vietnam War a "filthy, obscene memory" in which soldiers had "raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in a fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam in addition to the normal ravage of war, and the normal and very particular ravaging which is done by the applied bombing power of this country."

With hard-earned knowledge like that, you would think Kerry could be counted on to oppose sending young men and women off to kill and die in a brutal neo-colonial war. Instead, he was one of 30 Democratic Senators to support the congressional resolution that gave Bush the green light to invade Iraq. Go figure.



For more information on the convention visit RNCwatch.org, rncnotwelcome.org and counterconvention.org. To subscribe to the RNC Watch email list send a message to list@rncwatch.org.

THE LINES ARE BEING DRAWN

POLICE INFILTRATION ★ CIA HIJINX ★ BARON QUESTIONS REPUBLICAN BONAFIDES ★ \$25 MILLION FOR SECURITY

The *Independent* recently launched RNCWatch.org to track stories connected to this summer's Republican National Convention, addressing everything from the latest grassroots organizing efforts to the city's evolving security strategy and Republican plans for their New York visit. Below are some recent reports on the site:

★ **NYC Police Commissioner Ray Kelly** has refused to rule out that the NYPD will infiltrate groups that are planning to protest the GOP convention. On Jan. 18, Kelly told WNBC: "I'm not going to get into the specific tactics of – of what we're going to do. It's, you know, too early in the game. We're going to do everything that we can do lawfully, legally, reasonably to protect this city and to make certain that this is a – a peaceful and safe occasion."

★ **Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)** has come under criticism for her bill that would allow the CIA to place agents inside local police departments. On Jan. 22, the newly formed Campaign to Demilitarize the Police protested outside her district office in Manhattan. The group has called on her to withdraw the legislation which they say "poses great danger to our civil and human rights."

★ **City Council member and newly announced 2005 mayoral candidate Charles Barron** has come out strongly against GOP plans to hold its convention in New York. At a Martin Luther King Day rally in Madison Square Garden, Barron said: "New Yorkers are mad because nobody asked them whether they wanted Bush and Company to take over the city next summer. It is

wrong for Bush to come to New York City posing as the conquering hero and savior of the city when New Yorkers are overwhelmingly against his policies."

★ **The U.S. Senate** has approved giving New York City \$25 million to cover security expenses during the convention. The allocation came as a part of the \$820 billion omnibus spending bill.

★ **The Republicans** are examining how they can use the city during the convention to portray themselves as the party of diversity. In a profile of RNC head honcho Bill Harris, *New York* magazine recently summarized the plan:

"Harris has been scouring New York's neighborhoods for places to stage events that will present a picture of GOP racial and ethnic diversity to a national audience... Harris wants the GOP to venture into the outer boroughs. He's eyeing Flushing Meadows Park in Queens as a possible venue, and is exploring events in the city's diverse ethnic neighborhoods. The idea is that the sight of Republicans mingling with New Yorkers of all hues will project an image of a new, inclusive GOP to a national audience. 'I fully expect to have events all around New York,' Harris says. 'It's an opportunity to show the country, and the world, what the Republican Party is all about.'"

★ **David Norcross**, chairman of the convention's Committee on Arrangements, told the Associated Press: "All of the neighborhoods – they're like cultural centers for a variety of ethnic groups, and Bush is determined to compete in all markets. New York gives us a great backdrop for that."

– MIKE BURKE

COMMENTARY

MANAGING THE VOTE AT HOME AND AFAR

ELECTIONS WITHOUT SOVEREIGNTY, READY FOR PRIME TIME

BY DONALD PANETH

The fix was in when I dropped by the United Nations on Jan. 19. Television cameras, still photographers, and correspondents were ranged in a semi-circle about U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and L. Paul Bremer, administrator of the U.S.-sponsored Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA); Jeremy Greenstock, U.K. special representative; and Adnan Pachachi of the U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council (IGC).

Annan loves his job. Bremer is a functionary, recruited by Henry Kissinger. Greenstock fails the accent test; he sounds like he is from Brooklyn. Pachachi is well-fed, moon-faced.

Annan had just met with senior representatives of the IGC and CPA and spoke in his customary manner, soft-voiced and calmly.

"We covered a wide spectrum of issues," Annan said, including the transitional political process, humanitarian relief, security and the recovery and reconstruction of Iraq.

He had already dispatched to Iraq a four-man security team – two security experts and two bodyguards – to assess the situation. Should he return U.N. officials and international staff to Iraq? Was there sufficient security and enough time to hold countrywide elections in Iraq by June 30?

"The issue is whether the technical, political or security conditions exist for general direct elections to take place as early as May this year," Annan said.

That was not the issue, I thought. The issue was what did the U.S. and U.K. want in Iraq. And how were they trying to achieve it.

History pointed the direction. From the 16th century to the early 20th century, Ottoman Turks ruled Iraq. During World War I, the British invaded Iraq, declaring that they intended to return to Iraq some control of its own affairs.

In 1920, Iraq was established as a mandate by the League of Nations under British administration.

An elected Iraqi assembly reluctantly agreed in 1924 to a treaty with Great Britain providing for the maintenance of British military bases in Iraq and for a British veto over legislation. The next year, the first oil concession was granted. That is the kind of situation that the U.S. and U.K. are seeking – the maintenance of their strategic position in the Middle East and control of Iraqi oil.

Annan is cooperating, and I thought, the U.N. is evaporating before my eyes.

On Jan. 27, he said in Paris that he had concluded that the U.N. could play a constructive role in Iraq. Therefore, once he was satisfied that the CPA would provide adequate security arrangements, he would send a mission to Iraq. The mission would search for alternate ways to form an Iraqi government.

Might the new Iraqi government be selected in caucuses? That proposal was opposed by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, a cleric

esteemed by many Shiites in Iraq. Sistani was insisting on direct elections, and wants Iraqi experts, not ones from the United Nations, to determine the viability of direct elections.

Meanwhile, the Secretary-General's special adviser Lakhdar Brahimi met in Washington, D.C. for undisclosed discussions with U.S. officials, among them, Richard Armitage, Deputy Secretary of State, and Condeleeza Rice, National Security Adviser.

On Jan. 30, Annan announced that he was sending a mission to Iraq to determine the feasibility of early elections.

The connection between the Iraq dilemma and the U.S. presidential election is manifest. President George W. Bush wants to be able to tell the American people to look at what his administration has accomplished – deposed and captured Saddam Hussein and brought the Iraqi people democracy and freedom.

As Ahmed Chalabi, an IGC member and Pentagon favorite, told the *New York Times* last November, "The whole thing was set up so President Bush could come to the airport in October for a ceremony to congratulate the new Iraqi government. When you work backwards from that, you understand the dates the Americans were insisting on."

If Bush succeeds, special events will follow in 2005.

'The election was set up so Bush could come to the airport in October for a ceremony to congratulate the new Iraqi government.'

—Ahmed Chalabi

DR ★★★★★ STRANGE VOTE

It must have been a relief. Michael Moore finally got to stop fighting the hard fight, relax and just give up. With his trademark *just-folks* schtick, Mike endorsed Gen. Wesley Clark for Best Democrat To Beat Bush. He christened the campaign "The General Vs. The Deserter" and baited Bush for going AWOL from the Texas Air National Guard during the Vietnam War, perhaps the only smart thing our President has ever done.

BY JED BRANDT



Wesley Clark isn't running against Bush. Not yet. He's fighting for the Democratic Party's nomination against the liberal left with the indiscrete support of Clinton and the Democratic Leadership Council. Clark, like Kerry and rest of the front-runners is campaigning against the very idea that we could actually be a different kind of country — a country not at war with the world, not run by militarists and corporations, groaning under a culture of fear. He promises nothing but more of the same. In fact, he brags about it.

If the enamel-flag-on-the-lapel didn't clue you in, Clark's campaign slogan is "Patriotism, Faith, Family and Inclusion." In other words, Clark is running on Bush's "compassionate conservatism" platform from the last election. It's kind of like how Clinton was the final triumph of Reaganism.

Moore is still smart enough to know this country isn't particularly democratic. To his credit, he's done us all a favor, ignored the whole charade of the primaries and cut to the chase: The only way to elect a Democrat is to nominate a life-long Republican acceptable to Middle America, a.k.a. the White South, and, more to the point, all the Fortune 500 donors and intellectuals of justification who Moore likes to call the "swing voter."

Moore is going with someone we're not supposed to like, who is unacceptable at face value. Clark is supposed to be 'electable' exactly to the degree that he is despicable. Any egalitarian, non-militarist, secular vision for America must not just be put aside, but rejected *even in possibility* because it falls outside of what the current system can bear. Moore is mistaking the system's necessities for ours. It's his smile that makes it awful.

He's saying that anyone to the left of Lieberman, even a war criminal like Clark, are the stark realm of possibility. We can only defeat Bush-the-man by embracing Bush-the-agenda. If elections are theater, Moore sure learned his lines and knows his audience.

Whether Clark ultimately gets to ride his white horse into the Boston convention remains to be seen. Whether it's Kerry, Clark or Dean, the eventual nominee won't speak to our hopes and won't change the fundamental direction of this country. A vote for either of the ruling parties is a vote for everything sick about this country: flag, faith, ersatz democracy and war forever.

"The greatest benefit of a terrified public is that the corporate, political leadership can get away with anything." That's what Moore said at the end of Bowling For Columbine. Apparently, he took his own message to heart. Moore has made a choice. Instead of using his passion and skills to convince Southern whites that they should love themselves more than they hate everybody else, he has instead cast his charm at limiting the horizons of anyone who thinks we might actually do better than this.

ALL-AMERICAN

Wesley Clark calls himself an "American Hero" on his election website replete with accompanying tales of his action-figure antics rappelling down the side of a Yugoslavian cliff to retrieve the wedding ring of a fallen comrade in order to return it to the dead man's widow. He wants us to know that he's a soldier who understands loss, sacrifice and what needs to be done. That anecdote is the only mention of death during his watch as commander of the first air war in Europe since the Luftwaffe was downed.

If he were ever brought before the kind of International Criminal Court that the 'unilateralist' Bush vetoed, Clark would surely be convicted of war crimes.

At least, that's what Amnesty International has said regarding his bombing of media outlets, civilian infrastructure and schools.

Before someone drudges up the Nuremberg defense on Clark's behalf, that he was just doing his soldier's duty (as a 4-star

general), they should check out his defense of the School of the Americas. According to training manuals released by the Pentagon in 1996, this Army school housed at Fort Benning, Georgia, is responsible for training Latin American military officers in counter-insurgency's more delicate operations like torture, extortion and execution.

"This school is the best means available to ensure that the armed forces in Latin America and the armies in Latin America understand U.S. values and adopt those values as their own," Clark told Congress while he was in charge of the school. Clark is currently touring the homeland on his "True Values Tour."

Clark supports the occupation of Iraq and intends to work towards a more successful conquest of the Iraqi people. He also supports the occupation of Kuwait. Roughly a quarter of the country is now a U.S. military base. Even Saddam Hussein wasn't that crazy.

Clark will maintain the largest stockpile of nuclear weapons in the world. He advocates the use of "depleted uranium" weapons and has, in fact, used them. Then again, the only President to ever nuke anyone, twice, was a Democrat.

>>Some people will sacrifice principles and reason to get Bush out of office. Go ahead and vote. It doesn't matter anyway. At some point you just have to ask yourself why you're bothering.

Clark is an ardent supporter of Israel and blames the Palestinian people for their own dispossession, expulsion, occupation and refusal to be conquered. He supports Israel's walling of the West Bank, which effectively turns occupied Palestine into a concentration camp. The Democratic Party does not allow its members to criticize Israel. Two Southern congresspeople were thrown out in the last election to make this point. They were from the Black South, not The White South, so whatever.

Rhetorical anti-racism only extends to necessary Democratic Party constituencies. Clark has very little to say on the round-ups that continue to haunt all Muslims, especial-

OR
HOW
MICHAEL
MOORE
LEARNED
TO
STOP
WORRYING
& LOVE
THE
BOMBERS

ly here in New York and New Jersey. Clark kills Arabs, he doesn't court their votes. He supports the illegal military camps at Guantanamo, themselves built in occupied eastern Cuba. No joke. But hey, FDR built concentration camps for Japanese-Americans. Maybe Clark is a liberal after all.

At a certain point, you have to ask what evil really is lesser, the one who spits you in the eye or the guy who stabs you in the back. Clark is like Bush. He likes Bush. He's just not *actually* Bush.

Clark promises to eliminate federal income taxes for working people. He talks about "schools" and "jobs" and "healthcare" without really saying how he'll do anything. If it all sounds good, that's because it's supposed to. It's called "telling people what they want to hear." Clark will deliver the goods right after Clinton gets around to universal health care.

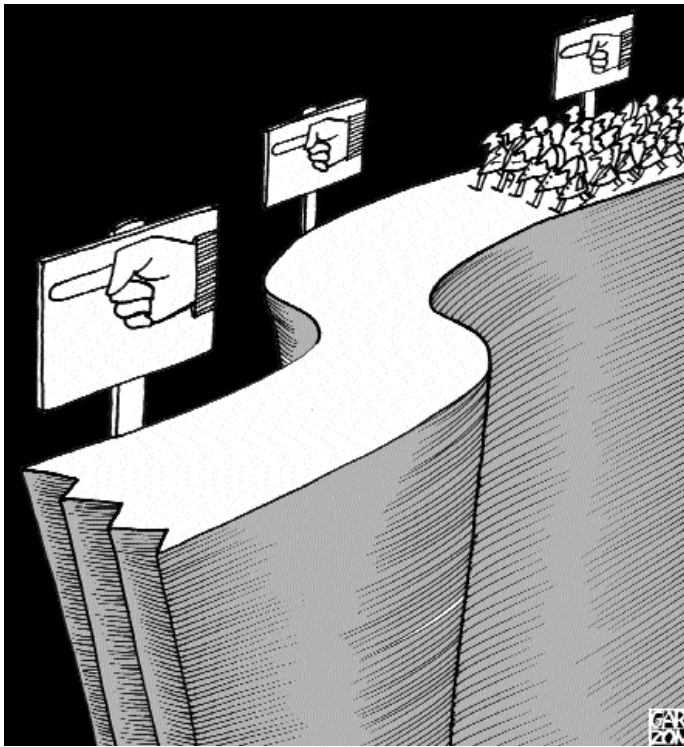
Some people will sacrifice principles and reason to get Bush out of office. Go ahead and vote. It doesn't matter anyway. At some point you just have to ask yourself why you're bothering. The rich will stay rich. The poor will stay poor. And we can be sure of wars and more wars. Let's face it. It's not our government.

If this country can't by its very nature allow for the possibility of a decent government, then let's *really* cut to the chase. Thomas Jefferson said we should have a revolution every 20 years. It's been over 200 and it shows. No matter how far-fetched, a popular revolt is way more likely than the Democrats doing anything for us, to say nothing of the rest of the world.

EL INDEPENDIENTE



ESTADOS UNIDOS: LA MAQUINARIA ELECTORAL



POR SILVIA ARANA

Resulta difícil analizar las posiciones de los candidatos demócratas sobre temas que afectan a los latinos, como la política migratoria. Y resulta difícil por el más sencillo de los motivos: dicen muy poco, casi nada. Howard Dean reaccionó a la propuesta de Bush de reformar la política migratoria con un programa bracero controlado por las empresas que necesiten trabajadores extranjeros. Dean declaró que el programa bracero es un modelo que fomenta la explotación de los inmigrantes, baja los salarios para todos los trabajadores y beneficia únicamente a las empresas.

Los candidatos con posibilidades de ganar – Kerry, Dean, Clark, Edwards – han manifestado la siguiente posición sobre inmigración: Fortalecer el control de las fronteras

para detener el flujo de inmigrantes y facilitar el camino a la legalización de los que estén trabajando, pagando impuestos y cumpliendo con las leyes del país. Ninguno explica qué es este “camino a la legalización”. Ninguno de los cuatro mencionó la frase “amnistía para los trabajadores indocumentados”.

Las primeras elecciones primarias y caucuses se realizaron en estados mayoritariamente blancos: Iowa y New Hampshire, donde el voto latino, al igual que el voto afroamericano, no tienen peso. El 3 de febrero se realizaron elecciones primarias y caucuses en siete estados, dos de los cuales tienen un importante porcentaje de población latina: Arizona y Nuevo México. Arizona tiene un 25% de latinos y Nuevo México tiene más del 42% de latinos.

Algunos de los candidatos tienen sitios web con información dirigida a la comunidad latina.

El mejor preparado, y el más pintoresco, es el del general Wesley Clark. En una carta a los latinos, Clark dice compartir los ideales de Benito Juárez, de Bolívar, de César Chávez, de Hostos, a los que reconoce como gestadores del sueño americano. (Toda una sorpresa el reconocimiento que “americano” también se refiere a América Latina.) En el sitio hay una carta de la nuera de Clark, una inmigrante colombiana, que enfatiza el compromiso de éste con la comunidad latina. Menciona que Clark apoya la educación bilingüe, el Dream Act (Ley que permitiría el ingreso a la universidad a jóvenes indocumentados que llegaron a EE.UU. antes de cumplir 16 años), acción afirmativa en el ejército, mejoras en el empleo y la política migratoria (sólo un enunciado). No hay página web en español para Kerry, la página de Edwards es prolijamente breve y la de Dean, que es el único candidato que habla castellano, está mal traducida y con signos en lugar de acentos y ñes.

Más allá de los cuatro candidatos principales, es importante notar que Dennis Kucinich, quien sólo alcanzó el 1% de los votos en las primarias de New Hampshire, fue el único en decir de manera clara y contundente que Estados Unidos debe legalizar a través de una amnistía a todos los inmigrantes que trabajan en este país. Fue uno de los pocos candidatos en condenar la invasión a Irak y proponer que las tropas de Estados Unidos salgan inmediatamente de Irak. Es un candidato anti ALCA y anti NAFTA, que obviamente no obtendrá el apoyo de las corporaciones. Con eso su suerte parece estar sellada: No recibió suficientes donaciones para financiar una campaña que compita con los dólares de Kerry, Dean, Clark, Edwards.

Desde 1976, el candidato que ha juntado más dinero en el año anterior a las elecciones, es el que ha sido nominado por su partido para las elecciones presidenciales. En 1975 Carter y Ford fueron los candidatos que más dinero reunieron y los nominados por sus respectivos partidos; en 1979 fueron Reagan y Carter; en 1983 Reagan y Mondale; y la fórmula no falló incluyendo 1999, con Gore y George W. Bush como nominados.

Los escritores norteamericanos Greg Palast y Charles Lewis sostienen que el sistema electoral estadounidense está roto. Sólo pueden competir los millonarios o los que estén dispuestos a solicitar donaciones de millonarios. Es un proceso elitista del que están excluidas las grandes mayorías, no solamente la comunidad latina.

BREVES

TRIPLE FRONTERA

El paso del coordinador de la Oficina Antiterrorista del Departamento de Estado estadounidense, Joseph Cofer Black, por Buenos Aires, dejó en claro que el gobierno de George W. Bush está decidido a continuar su estrategia de militarizar la Triple Frontera (Argentina, Brasil y Paraguay).

A pesar de que por insostenibles van cayendo los argumentos de que el lugar es o fue un nido de terroristas islámicos, y según una versión más delirante refugio de células de Al Qaeda, Estados Unidos insiste en adjudicar a la zona un lugar en el mapa del terrorismo que trazan sus expertos.

Lo único comprobable es que la Triple Frontera es un lugar estratégico geográficamente, que comprende también el subsuelo de la zona circundante, el llamado Acuífero Guarani, la mayor reserva de agua dulce no contaminada del mundo.

BOLIVIA

El secretario ejecutivo de la Central Obrera Boliviana (COB), Jaime Solares, lanzó una “declaratoria de guerra” a la administración del presidente Mesa; entre tanto, el dirigente Roberto de la Cruz dijo que prepara la tercera insurrección popular contra el neoliberalismo, durante la inauguración del VIII Congreso Ordinario de la Central Obrera Departamental (COD) en Potosí.

“¡Guerra!”, esa fue la consigna que utilizó el máximo ejecutivo de los trabajadores. La teoría de la revolución se pondrá en práctica con el camino a la insurrección”, dijo a tiempo de señalar que la oligarquía debe caer para que el pueblo tome el poder y el Estado.

“Para cumplir esa meta, es preciso alistar los paros, huelgas, bloqueos y otro tipo de medidas que paralicen el aparato productivo del país para pelear contra el Gobierno que solo acata las recetas económicas de EEUU”, agregó.

A su turno, el dirigente de la Central Obrera Regional (COR) de El Alto, Roberto de la Cruz, afirmó que actualmente se realiza un “trabajo de hormiga” para consolidar la tercera rebelión popular contra el neoliberalismo.

Por otra parte, el presidente de la Federación de Empresarios Privados de La Paz, Bernd Abendroth, afirmó que el gobierno debe actuar con “fuerza y rigidez” para evitar la ocupación de tierras que está afectando la propiedad privada en varias regiones del país.

CHIAPAS

El Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas informó que fueron quemadas 23 viviendas en la comunidad Nuevo San Rafael, ubicada en la reserva de la biósfera de Montes Azules, propiedad de indígenas bases de apoyo del Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN). La quema ocurrió después de que decenas de integrantes de la Secretaría de Marina, policías y empleados de la Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente (Profepa) llegaron a la comunidad. El área rica en recursos ha sido codiciada desde hace mucho tiempo por las multinacionales. Mientras los gobiernos y multinacionales insisten en el avance del Plan Puebla Panama y el ALCA, la “guerra de baja intensidad” en contra las comunidades autónomas Zapatistas se convierte en una descarada represión.

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